

Poetry.

SHOW ME THY WAY.

Dark the night, the snow is falling;
Through the storm are voices calling;
Guides mistaken and misleading,
Far from home and help receding.
Vain is all those voices say;
Show me Thy way!

Blind am I as those that guide me;
Let me feel Thee close beside me!
Come as light into my being!
Unto me be eyes, all-seeing!
Hear my one heart's wish, I pray;
Show me Thy way!

Son of man, and Lord immortal,
Opener of the heavenly portal,
In Thee all my hope is hidden;
Never yet was soul forbidden
Near Thee, always near, to stay;
Show me Thy way!

Thou art truth's eternal morning;
Led by Thee, all evil scorning,
Through the paths of pure salvation
I shall find Thy habitation.
Whence I never more shall stray;
Show me Thy way!

Thou must lead me, and none other,
Truest Lover, Friend and Brether,
Thou art my soul's shelter, whether
Stars gleam out or tempests gather;
In Thy presence night is day;
Show me Thy way!

Contributions.

THE BOOK OF ALL BOOKS.

J. O. TALLEY.

[Read before the Sunday-school Convention held in Milledgeville, Ill., Oct. 1895 by J. O. Talley.]

Christian workers, in the brief time allotted to me, I cannot address you as fully on this theme as I would like. To the minds of men, there are books beyond number. But I am persuaded that it is not the numberless scintillations of the human mind that you wish me to speak of to night.

If the biographies of all men and women that ever lived in the world, were written, each one would be only a paragraph of the great encyclopedic summary of the world's activity, and the whole would be but a modest sized volume in the sight of God.

But the *Book of all books*, pre-eminently; the Diatheka of the Greeks, the Testamentum of the Latins, the Covenant of the Hebrews, the *Bible* for the world, occupies the largest and best place in the hearts of the most advanced, and accomplished races in the world. Around this condensation of history, poetry, prophecy and doctrine, cluster the most wonderful providences of God, and the crowning genius of man. Coursing through this rugged and uneven world like a river in a

parched and dreary desert, quenching the thirst of the thirsty, bathing the brow of the weary workers, refreshing the hearts of the toilers on life's ofttimes steep and tiresome highway, it ever flows on.

From its pages we glean the history of the past doings of man, and it does not fail to state the bad as well as the good side of human happenings. As to its morals, I need only to say, that the best fruits of human life are grown in *Bible* orchards.

As history, it flows through the ages, from generation to generation, bearing on its pages the dealings of God with man, and has chronicled the doings of nations, whose very existence would have been questioned had they not found a place in its pages. In deed the things that disputed fifty years ago without any apparent cause other than they were found written in the Bible, have upon more recent investigation been proven to be true. Has the world a history? Yes, and in it, the Bible is the center of the most aggressive and note-worthy consequences that have affected the mind of the race.

IS IT TRUE?

Whether we delve into the musty tombs of the Pharaohs, or the battle-trodden soils of the Phoenicians, or the buried ruins of Persian and Babylonian palaces, we but resurrect the indispensible proofs of its claims. It has left its indelible stamp on those who have been under its power, it has produced a people from whom has come many of the greatest men the world has ever seen; it has produced the best civilization that there is in the world to-day; it has given to the world the *Jesus*, the personification of love, grace, mercy, holiness, and *salvation*.

ITS LITERATURE.

Mankind, constituted as we are, it would be expected that the matter of expression, would be one of the very first characteristics of an ancient document that would attract our attention, and be subjected to the severest criticism and investigation. But language like all the ingenious productions of man, has gone through many transformations, and it would be astonishing if it could not boast of some improvements. The Egyptian ox cart, as we see the figure of it on the resurrected tablets that were buried two thousand years ago, was a crude affair, but it answered the purpose. So too, the literature of that day expressed the thoughts of the people, and if it was crude it to a wonderful extent answered the purpose. Yet we dare not assume too much along that line, but whatever may have been the exterior, the quality of the heart was not very different

from that of our day. If four thousand years ago the people had only recently ceased to acknowledge a relationship to the monkey, they certainly had as tender hearts, and as lofty minds, as countless thousands of our day.

□ Poetry is defined as one of the fine arts, which has for its object the creation of intellectual pleasures by the use of imaginative language—the art of producing illusions of the imagination by the use of language. If words be but vehicles of conveyance, the language of the poet, may be but the carriage with the finer trappings in which the more refined emotions of the heart are want to sally forth into the world. Wonderful that we find in the Bible, even the most ancient books composing it, poetry that is unsurpassed for beauty, loftiness of tone, and purity of thought. Witness the book of Job, which is in all probability the oldest book in the Bible. Or the song of Moses, at the crossing of the Red Sea. Its prose is not less beautiful or touching, as we may see by the love of the father for the son, in Jacob and Joseph, or the blessing pronounced by the dying patriarch on his sons, or the beautiful story of Ruth and Naomi.

The political element is not wanting, while we can scarcely separate the strictly political from the religious, yet we find many and useful laws, set forth in the writings of Moses, some of which we have scarcely improved upon, even in our day. Especially those relating to health, and many that affect the family relation, and domestic interests of the people; without which provisions we could not expect to attain to the dignity of a nation that would call for statesmanship and policy of government. In the ancient as in the modern world, it appears that those who entertained the most exalted convictions on religious matters, were also the most advanced statesmen, and manifested the greatest concern for the welfare of the masses. Witness the prophet Isaiah; who was not more prophet than statesman, for he could see that which many in our day cannot see, i. e., that the sins of a nation will reduce it to slavery, and foretold Israel's captivity in Babylon two hundred years before it occurred. Or the prophet Jeremiah, who while he was suffering with his people in bondage, did not cease to preach to them repentance, and recount to them the cause of their fall; nor did he fail to tell them the good providence of God to the obedient and faithful. Of all the books that lay claim to antiquity, none of them bears such indisputable proofs of ancient origin as the Bible. Nor are any of them so unique in this important particular, that while the Bible so truly pic-